

Letter from the Commander

Welcome to Aviano Air Base

Aviano is a great assignment and I know your time here will be very rewarding, both professionally and personally.

Aviano Air Base is home to the 31st Fighter Wing. The wing's mission is to provide combat power across the globe in support of US and NATO objectives. To accomplish this mission, the wing has two fighter squadron/aircraft maintenance teams of 21 F-16CMs each, an air control squadron, and an entire base dedicated to supporting the 8,000+ Americans that live and work at Aviano. The mission is challenging but very exciting. However, while I know you are probably interested in your new mission, what is really on your mind is, "What do I need to know about PCSing to Aviano?" We're here to help you with that!

PCSing to Aviano is more challenging than PCSing to most other bases. There are things you MUST do months in advance of your arrival at Aviano. Failure to do these things could delay your PCS travel, delay dependent or pet travel, and might even cost you money out of pocket.

HOT: If you have dependents, the #1 priority once you receive orders is to apply for an [official 'no-fee' passport and visa](#) for each of your dependents with the passport agent at your local Military Personnel Section. These documents can take months to acquire and you must possess them before leaving your current duty location -- your dependents need them to enter and remain in Italy. Failing to obtain 'no-fee' passports and visas puts your family at risk for [delayed entry](#) into Italy, or [deportation](#) if they arrive in Italy without the documents. Pet shipping can also be a challenge so please read the pet shipping requirements for Italy [here](#) and start preparing to ship your pet today. **Bottom line: Apply for a 'no-fee' passport and visa for each dependent as soon as you get your orders, and begin preparing for pet shipment immediately...a little effort now will make your PCS go a lot smoother.**

Your sponsor plays a critical role in your PCS to Italy. All inbound personnel should be assigned a sponsor to help guide newcomers through the PCS process. If you have orders to Aviano and haven't been contacted by a sponsor yet, please send an e-mail with your name, e-mail address, and gaining unit at Aviano to 31fss.fsfr.1@aviano.af.mil and we'll have your sponsor contact you. Our goal is to contact all inbound personnel months before arrival, so if you haven't been contacted yet, please help us help you by initiating contact using the e-mail address above.

For spouses, while you may receive some information from the official sponsor through your husband/wife, the Key Spouse in your unit would like to contact you now to help you get ready for your move and start connecting you to other spouses in the unit. Your unit's Key Spouse is a great source of information

and your direct link to all the other spouses in the unit, so please send an e-mail to your Key Spouse (unit Key Spouse e-mail links are [here](#)) and she/he will contact you shortly. Our goal is to have Key Spouses contact all inbound spouses months in advance, so if you haven't been contacted yet, please contact your Key Spouse by using the link above.

You'll find lot of information on the internet about Aviano. Unfortunately, some of it is inaccurate. I recommend you start your search for information on the official Aviano AB website (www.aviano.af.mil). It is the authoritative source of official information about Aviano where you'll find a lot of very useful information to help plan your move. From there, you can branch out to some of the other sources of information such as the ['Aviano Air Base' Facebook page](#) and unofficial websites and Facebook pages. You can also sign up now for Aviano's weekly e-mail bulletin, the "Wyvern," that includes base news and local events. I recommend you sign up now by sending your e-mail address to 31fw.panews@aviano.af.mil so you can start learning about your new base.

Aviano can be one of the best assignments you will have in your career. Yes, the base is very busy, but it is situated in a fantastic location...one hour from Venice; excellent beaches and great snow skiing/snowboarding less than an hour away; Rome, Milan, Florence, Munich, Budapest, and many other amazing cities are only hours away ... so there are excellent travel and cultural opportunities available to you. However, it takes a bit of planning, preparation, and expense to move to Italy, so get smart on the PCS requirements and start working the big issues now. Use your sponsor and Key Spouse...their job is to help prepare you for your move through extensive communication with you months in advance. Upon arrival, your sponsor will meet you and guide you through the first month of your assignment. However, while your sponsor will be very helpful, don't rely totally on them...ultimately only you can ensure a smooth PCS, so be proactive and get prepared for your upcoming move. (Check out your newcomers' [Top Ten here](#) for a list of ten things you need to know and do before you PCS to Aviano.)

Again, welcome to Aviano! I look forward to meeting you.

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